

THIS IS WHAT I MEANT

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. APARTMENT BALCONY - 11:30 PM

A cookie-cutter apartment building in a smaller-but-still-bustling city. Two girls are crowded onto the small balcony, neither wearing coats.

In the attached apartment, a party is in full swing, the dull thrumming of the bass and the occasional flashing light the only things reaching them outside.

KELSEY (mid-to-late 20's, cleans up nice) leans heavily on the railing, looking down at the street below. She is anxiously, methodically shredding an old shopping receipt.

As far away from Kelsey as she can get in the small space, MONTY (mid-to-late 20's, cleans up even nicer) is sipping slowly from a bottle of champagne. She is looking more at Kelsey than the scenery.

MONTY
Tell me a secret.

KELSEY
(distracted)
Hm?

MONTY
C'mon, it's almost midnight. Tell
me a secret.

Monty reaches across the space to nudge Kelsey with the bottle.

MONTY (CONT'D)
It's a family tradition.

She taps Kelsey with the bottle again. Kelsey pushes it away.

KELSEY
(annoyed)
Then do it with your family.

MONTY
I already did- I want to do it with
you.

KELSEY
Why?

MONTY
 (shrugging)
 I want to know something new about
 you. Before the year is over.

Beat. Kelsey turns just enough to face Monty.

KELSEY
 You already know everything about
 me, dummy. We've lived together for
 too long.

MONTY
 I don't know everything.

KELSEY
 Yeah-

MONTY
 Bullshit.

Kelsey glares at her.

Monty crosses the small space, settles next to Kelsey on the railing. She knocks their shoulders together.

MONTY (CONT'D)
 Tell me a secret, Kels.

Silence.

Drunken chanting of Fun.'s "We are Young" echoes up from the street. Kelsey opens her hands and the shredded paper drifts away, falling like snow.

She watches it go, and Monty watches Kelsey. She clears her throat.

MONTY (CONT'D)
 I'll go first, give you some time
 to think.

She takes another swig from the bottle.

MONTY (CONT'D)
 When I was doing my first communion
 in like...second grade, I guess? We
 had to do the confession thing to
 ease our catholic guilt and I
 couldn't think of any sins to tell
 the priest so I panicked and made
 them up. Told him all about a time
 I spilled paint on a wall and
 blamed it on my sister.

Kelsey snorts.

KELSEY
You lied to a priest?

MONTY
I lied to a priest.

KELSEY
Isn't that, like...also a sin?

Monty shrugs, takes another sip.

MONTY
Probably. At the risk of
disappointing my mother even
further, I don't give a rats ass.

Kelsey laughs, short and sweet, and Monty grins at her.
Kelsey grabs the champagne from Monty.

KELSEY
Well, here's to another year of
disappointing our mothers, then.

She takes a long sip and passes it back to Monty, who drains
the rest and sets the now empty bottle on the ground. The
laughter fades and a light silence falls between them again.

Monty glances back at the party they are both steadfastly
ignoring, squinting at the New Year's countdown on the TV
through the window.

MONTY
Your turn.

Kelsey turns away from Monty, staring down at the street.

KELSEY
I- I don't know.

MONTY
C'mon, just a little one. Anything.

Monty moves a little closer, their arms pressed against each
other.

MONTY (CONT'D)
Like...that time you ruined your
mom's favorite sweater-

KELSEY
Mon.

She continues crowding into Kelsey's space.

MONTY

-or when you woke up hungover in a cornfield, I still don't know that whole story-

KELSEY

Mon, stop-

MONTY

-or that thing from Paris that is an inside joke or-

KELSEY

(blurts out)

Ben broke up with me.

Beat. They stare at each other.

MONTY

(quietly)

Okay...I know that?

Kelsey takes a shaky breath and closes her eyes.

KELSEY

No, I mean, I told you- everyone- that **I** broke up with **him**, but I didn't. He ended it, and he said it was because I...

She cuts herself off, stepping away from Monty as much as she can. Kelsey tucks her arms over her chest and stares at her shoes, tries to fold herself as small as possible.

Monty watches for a moment, hesitant.

MONTY

Because why?

Kelsey sniffs and wipes at her face.

KELSEY

Nothing. Never mind.

MONTY

Kels.

KELSEY

You have your stupid secret- happy?

Monty steps in front of Kelsey, toe to toe. She ducks down to try and catch her eyes, to no avail. She reaches out slowly, pauses when Kelsey flinches.

After a beat, she continues her hand forward, catches Kelsey's chin and tilts her head up to force eye contact.

Kelsey shivers.

MONTY
(softly)
Kels, because why?

Kelsey's eyes dart across Monty's face, red and watery.

KELSEY
(whispering)
Because of you.

Monty's eyes widen, deer in headlights.

KELSEY (CONT'D)
He said...he said I wasn't all in on him, on us. He said I was distracted by you.

MONTY
(strained)
Kelsey.

KELSEY
He's right.

Monty steps back and keeps stepping back until she hits the railing on the other side of the balcony. She runs her hands through her hair anxiously, looks away.

MONTY
You can't say that...you can't just say that.

KELSEY
(choked up)
I'm sorry, I didn't want- not like this.

Kelsey sniffs and looks down again, shrinking.

KELSEY (CONT'D)
You- you've always been right here and I knew how you felt but I didn't know about me and I took too long and you're over me, probably, and I-

MONTY

You knew?

Kelsey nods.

MONTY (CONT'D)

(embarrassed)

For, um, how long?

KELSEY

(shrugging)

Since senior year.

MONTY

Jesus Christ.

Monty pinches the bridge of her nose and turns away, towards the city. She laughs awkwardly.

MONTY (CONT'D)

~~Guess I'm not as smooth as I thought.~~

Kelsey opens and closes her mouth a few times, wipes her nose on her sleeve, watches Monty try to regain her composure.

KELSEY

I want to kiss you. That's my secret.

Monty leans over the railing, buries her face in her hands.

KELSEY (CONT'D)

I want to kiss you, but I don't know if you want me to. Anymore.

A siren wails through the street below. Kelsey waits for the noise to die down.

KELSEY (CONT'D)

It's okay if I'm too late. It took me too long to figure it out and I'm too late.

She kicks at the concrete.

KELSEY (CONT'D)

(whisper)

I'm sorry, Mon.

MONTY

Say it again.

Monty turns back around. Kelsey hesitates before looking at her.

KELSEY
What?

MONTY
You want to kiss me?

She takes a step forward.

KELSEY
I want to kiss you.

MONTY
Yeah?

KELSEY
I've wanted to kiss you for a while, I just didn't know how to, how this-

Kelsey motions between them.

Monty takes another small step closer, a small smile starting.

KELSEY (CONT'D)
(nervously)
I want...I want you to kiss me.

She crosses the rest of the space and kisses Kelsey, hands framing her face.

Monty pulls back, just enough that Kelsey stumbles forward to try and follow. Monty's hands move from her cheeks to her shoulders, steadying her.

Kelsey stares at her, eyes red and teary and wide. She brings a hand to her lips, in a state of shock.

MONTY
That was a pretty good secret. My was definitely slacking in comparison.

KELSEY
Tell me another one, then.

MONTY
I've wanted to do this-

Monty leans in again, kisses Kelsey soft and quick.

MONTY (CONT'D)

-since we were 19. Sophomore year,
the away game at State.

KELSEY

The red card?

MONTY

Mmhm, the red card. And I didn't
think I would ever get to.

Kelsey presses up this time, burying her hands in Monty's
hair. She kisses Monty and Monty kisses back.

Cheering erupts inside and both girls jump. Somewhere in the
distance, fireworks are going off over the city.

They smile at each other, soft and sappy.

KELSEY

Happy New Year.

MONTY

Yeah, it is.